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- The skeleton of *Geococcyx*. From the Journal of Anatomy and Physiology, London, Jan., 1886. Both from the author.
- Shudder, S. H.*—Nomenclator Zoologicus. Bull. U. S. National Museum, No. 19, Washington, 1882–1884.
- Systematische Uebersicht der fossilen Myriopoden, Arachnoiden und Insekten. 1885. Both from the author.
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GENERAL NOTES.

GEOGRAPHY AND TRAVELS.¹

ASIA.—*Tong-king*.—The April number of the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society contains a map of Tong-king, accompanied by an article upon the hill region which lies beyond the delta of the Song-coi. The writer (Mr. I. G. Scott) states that though the Song-coi is a noble-looking river, boats drawing over fifteen feet cannot ascend its Cua Cam mouth to Haiphong, while boats drawing six feet have difficulty in reaching Ha-noi. There are four principal mouths, of which the Cua Cam is the most northern, but it seems probable that the Cua Dai (the most southern) will shortly be made use of for deep-sea ships. The provinces of Kwung-yen, Lang-son, Cao-bang, Thai-nguyen and Tuyen-kwan form the plateau region, north of the Song-coi delta. This is a land of rounded, grassy hills, without prominent peaks.

The delta is rapidly extending. When Ha-noi was built by the Chinese in the eighth century, it was a sea-port, but is now a hundred miles inland. Two centuries ago Hung-yen was on the coast, and was the site of the Dutch and Portuguese factories. It is now thirty miles inland. Our author declares that Lang-son is, geographically and ethnographically, Chinese. It is on the Chinese slope and is separated from the rest of Tong-king by a barren mountain belt fifty miles in width. Some remarkable cave-temples exist near the town.

The Survey of Japan.—During the last five years the National Survey of Japan has been steadily progressing under the superintendence of Dr. Naumann, who has now left the task to be carried out by the Japanese he has trained. An account of the work performed may be found in *Nature* (April 29th, 1886). The survey was based mainly on economical considerations, and started with topographical, geological and agronomical departments. A chemical section was added. The existence of Devonian, Carboniferous, Triassic, Jurassic, Cretaceous and Tertiary rocks was

¹ This department is edited by W. N. LOGKINGTON, Philadelphia.

proved by well-characterized fossils. Radiolarian slates, probably older than the Carboniferous limestone, occur in almost every part of the archipelago. The Japanese island chain is one of the finest examples of a mountain range of unilateral structure.

Asiatic News.—The Russian Trans-Caspian railway was by the end of last year opened as far as Ghiaurs. From this spot to Merv the necessary earthworks were completed. From thence to Chardjui, 118 miles from Merv, the route will be across desert. It is proposed to prevent the access of moving sand by plantations along the line.—An ethnographical map of Asia, six and a half feet by four and a half feet, showing the localities of 136 divisions of peoples and languages, in twenty-six tints of color and shading, has been made by Herr Vincent von Haardt, of Vienna.—A recent issue of *China Review* contains an article, by Mr. C. Taylor, upon the aborigines of Formosa. Mr. Taylor has resided four years in the south of the island, and his information regarding the Paiwans, or people of this part, is therefore derived from intimate observation. He is also acquainted with the Ameirs, who have scattered themselves in small villages along the east coast down to South Cape. With the Pipohuans, or half-castes of the plains, and the Tipuns, he is only acquainted through information obtained from stragglers domiciled among the Paiwans.—The report of Mr. G. Schumacher, published by the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, is full of interesting details upon the Jaulan and Hauran regions. The river Yarmuk, whose course marks the southern limit of the Jaulan basaltic region, receives from the north several tributaries, which are here for the first time correctly mapped. The Rukhad, one of these, rises at the foot of Mt. Hermon (Jebel-esh-Sheikh). Its tributary, the Wady Seisun, falls 517 feet in 420 yards by a succession of cataracts. These rivers have their sources in springs, and there are clear indications of the existence of large reservoirs of underground water in the basaltic and calcareous formations.

ASIATIC ISLANDS AND AUSTRALIA, ETC.—Barren and Narcoudam, two volcanic islands belonging to the Andaman archipelago, and lying east of the main islands, have been surveyed by Capt. Holday, of the Indian Survey. Barren island is circular, about two miles across, and its principal features are a main crater, with axes of one and a half miles and one mile, and an inner cone about half a mile across at its base and rising 1015 feet above the sea. The inner cone bears upon its summit a small crater from which steam and smoke issue. The volcano is known to have been active towards the end of last century.

Narcoudam is about two and a half miles in length and half as broad. It rises 2330 feet above the sea, and is composed of trachytic lava, but no trace of any crater was discovered. The slopes are covered with dense forest, but no water was found.

Mr. E. W. Birch has recently visited and reported upon the Keeling or Cocos islands. These islands, over twenty in number, very narrow and thickly planted with cocoa palms, surround a lagoon for the most part shallow. The island is evidently rising. The islands are administered by an English family named Ross, and have a Malay population of more than 500. The temperature is wonderfully equable, varying in a year only from 72° in September to 84° in April.

Mr. Winnecke asserts, as in 1877, that Lake Eyre is a considerable depth below sea-level. The highest point along his survey of the route of the overland telegraph was the Burt plains, 2532 feet above sea-level; but the MacDonnell ranges, in which these plains are situated, rise several thousand feet higher. The Finke river, the southern part of which is now being reexplored by Mr. Lindsay, is described as the largest and most important in Central Australia.

The population of the Sandwich islands has increased from 57,985 in 1878 to 80,578 in 1884, yet in that time the native race has diminished from 44,088 to 40,014. The census of 1884 gave 17,932 Chinese, 9377 Portuguese, 2066 Americans, 1282 British, and 1600 Germans; the previous numbers (1878) being 5916, 436, 1276, 883 and 272 respectively.

A new atlas of the Dutch East Indies has been published at the Hague. It contains a map of the entire archipelago, four maps of Java and Madura, giving population, roads, etc.; maps of parts of Java to a still larger scale, and others of Banka, Billiton, Borneo, Celebes, Sumbawa, Timor, the Moluccas, etc.

EUROPE.—*European News*.—From the observations of E. von Meydell, extending over a period of eight to ten years, it appears that the waters of the Black sea are subject to slight variations of level dependent upon the amount of water brought down by the Danube, Don, etc. The maximum, nine to seventeen centimeters above mean water-level, is attained in May and June, and is highest in those years in which the rainfall in Central and Southern Russia is greatest.—New and more precise levelings to ascertain the heights above the sea of Lakes Ladoga, Onega and Ilmen (Russia) place them at 16, 115 and 59 feet respectively; instead of, as before believed, 59, 237 and 157 feet.—The population of Prussia (not the German Empire), according to the census of December 1, 1885, was 28,314,032. In 1880 it was 27,279,111.—“The highest peak in Denmark” is a hill in the forest of Ky, 163 meters in height.

AMERICA.—*American News*.—A Swiss named Rodt has founded a flourishing colony in Juan Fernandez, which he leases from Chili. Not only agriculture, but manufacturing industries are practiced. The colonists comprise members of most civilized nationalities, except Prussians, who are excluded.—In the Jan-

uary issue of the *Revue Geographique*, M. H. Condreau gives an account of the manners of the Uapes. Most of the tribes of the river border have no garment whatever, but in some tribes the men wear a "calembe" of bark, and in the villages lower down the river the men don pantaloons and the women a chemise when they are full-dressed. Some tribes still inter their dead in the "maloca," or hut, which the Tucanas immediately abandon in order to build another.—M. Thouar reports as the result of his last journey to the rapids of the Pilcomayo, that it is possible at any season of the year to go from the mouth of that river at Lamboné to the mission of San Francisco de Solano, in Bolivia, at the very foot of the Andes. The difficulties caused by accumulations of trees and the consequent formation of shallows can, he believes, be overcome.

AFRICA.—*African News*.—The missionaries sent out by the Basel Missionary Society to the Gold coast have, since 1882, explored the Volta basin pretty thoroughly, and the geographical results obtained have been considerable. A map of the routes is published in the April number of the Proc. Roy. Geog. Society. —Lieutenants Kund and Tappenbeck struck southward from Stanley pool in August last, returning to Leopoldville on January 27th. They crossed the Quango, also the Bolombo or Sankuru and its affluents, and descended the Lukenje to Kwamouth. It is stated that they have discovered a new river, the Ikata, which M. Wauters believes to be the upper course of the Mfini.—The Bulletin of the Soc. Roy. de Geog. d'Anvers contains an interesting account of an exploration upon the Senegal, from Futa-Djallon to Bambouc, undertaken by M. E. Noirot, who seems everywhere to have met with a good reception, and who is enthusiastic respecting the productions and future commerce of the Senegal basin.—The murder of the young and enterprising French traveler, Palat, at two days' distance from Insalah, is alleged to be due to the Senonsian fraternity. On the other hand, French journals are disposed to lay much of the blame upon the French commandant, whose treatment of the adventurous young lieutenant was such as to make the Arabs believe him to be in disfavor with his own people.—The members of an expedition sent out by the Geographical Society of Milan have been massacred by the Emir of Harrar. Count Porro, the leader, Professor Sicata, and seven others were killed.—M. Barral and his wife, who set out from Obock to explore Abyssinia, with the object of establishing commercial relations, were murdered by the Danakils on the borders of Shoa.—Mr. R. Baron communicates to *Nature* some valuable notes upon the volcanic phenomena of Central Madagascar. In this part there are many extinct volcanic cones, especially in two localities situated, the one fifty to sixty miles west, the other seventy to eighty miles southwest of Antananarivo.

They are scoria cones, none of them probably rising more than 1000 feet above their base. Many have breached craters, whence floods of black basaltic lava have flowed. The almost perfect state of preservation of the cones and the undecomposed condition of the lava proves that these volcanoes must have been active in comparatively recent times.—Scarcely a year passes without one or more earthquake shocks in Central Madagascar, but they are never severe nor of long duration.—Cardinal Mas-saja has published at Rome a work entitled “My ‘thirty-five mission years in Upper Ethiopia.” Numerous illustrations and a good map accompany the text.

GEOLOGY AND PALÆONTOLOGY.

THE FOSSIL MAN OF PEÑON, MEXICO.—On my return to this city after a long absence, I read the observations published in the *New York Tribune* concerning my account of the fossil man of the Peñon.

It will give me great pleasure to clear up the doubt expressed by Professor Newberry with regard to the importance of the discovery of the man of the Peñon.

Professor Newberry does not believe in the importance of the discovery, and argues in this manner: “The calcareous bed in which the fossil remains were found must have been modern travertin; it could not have been deposited below the waters of a lake, but probably belongs to an aerial or superficial formation, since otherwise it would be of equal thickness and uniform on the bottom and on the borders of the lake; if the limestone is siliceous, it must belong to a hydrothermal deposit.”

It is above all certain that the limestone is not modern travertin, for it does not form concentric layers above the human remains, nor over other recent objects, as would be the case were it such. The bones are sealed up, so to speak, in the calcareous rock, without being in any way coated, and were probably deposited while the rock was yet soft and under water. As the clearances and excavations at the foot of the small mountain of Peñon have been continued, I have been able to prove the persistence of the facts indicated in my article published in the *NATURALIST*, August, 1885, as well as in a fuller account of the same subject published in 1884 by Professor Antonio del Castillo and by me.

The new excavations have shown more clearly yet the three formations of which I have spoken, ranged as follows:

(1) A superficial layer 10 centimeters thick, formed of vegetable earth, containing lacustrine shells and fragments of modern pottery.

(2) A layer of calcareo-siliceous tufa, of but slight hardness, with remains of old pottery, 50 centimeters thick.

(3) Siliceous limestone, very hard, in a thick bed, inclined towards the north. Here are found roots transformed into *men-*